Saskatchewan
Agriculture
and Food

FINAL REPORT

HOT BOX COMPETITION

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Culinary Competition Celebrates Success

Regina, February 14, 2001: Organizers of the 2001 Sask Cuisine Culinary Salon are celebrating the overwhelming success of the event, highlighted by the Regina Academy of Chefs and Cooks' first-ever Iron Chef competition held February 9 - 11.

Contestants from across western Canada arrived in Regina on Friday evening to begin nightlong preparations for the cold competition. Over sixty entries made a dazzling display at the Cornwall Centre in Regina, with final honours awarded early Saturday afternoon. (See the attached list of winners.)

Preparations for the inaugural Iron Chef competition began at 7 am on Sunday at the Turvey Centre, when teams from Banff, Alberta and Brandon, Manitoba joined Team Regina and Team Saskatoon in the pursuit of hot kitchen glory. Large crowds observed the intricate works in progress, and were on hand for the afternoon's luncheon, during which the culinary masterpieces were enjoyed in an elegant fine dining atmosphere. Dishes created by the four teams represented a full range of epicurean delights, including innovative appetizers, mouth watering main dishes and artistic, delectable desserts.

The Beef Information Centre (B.I.C.), hot competition meat sponsor, provided Canadian AAA strip loin to be used by the competitors as either their appetizer or entrée. All four teams chose very different and innovative presentations to showcase the beef as their hot main dishes.

"We were delighted with the success of the event, and with the opportunity to highlight Canadian beef in the Iron Chef competition," says Joan Perrin, Promotion and Marketing Manager for B.I.C. in Saskatchewan. "This contest by industry's leading competitors gave us an exciting forum to combine new flavours and showcase new and creative ways to serve beef, which remains the country's most popular protein choice."

The difficult task of declaring a winner was finally accomplished when judges Chef Clayton Folkers, Culinary Team Canada Co-Captain of Edmonton, Alberta and Chef Marcel Kretz, Culinary Team Canada Coach of Val David, Quebec, awarded the Iron Chef title to Chefs Trent Brears, Chris Diana, Barry Bailey and Mike Miller from Team Regina. Judging criteria was based not only on taste and presentation of the dishes, but also on work habits, the ability to work as a team, kitchen skills and timing.

"We were fortunate to have two world class judges for this competition," says committee member Don Dixon. "The consistently high quality of the entries made their job very difficult."

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The judges also awarded individual honours to Team Saskatoon for the best appetizer, to Team Manitoba for the best entrée, and to Team Regina for the best dessert.

The Peoples' Choice award provided another element of fun for the audience, who were given the opportunity to awards points for the taste and presentation of each of the three courses. Chefs Derek Cotton, Jason Straker, Michael Beaule and Ryan L'Heureux from Team Saskatoon were named the People's Choice winners.

"The event has surpassed all our expectations, and I'm in awe about how smoothly it all went," says Chairperson Bonnie Brears. "The excitement and enthusiasm built all weekend, with the Iron Chef competition providing a really thrilling finish. And what a coup for the province of Saskatchewan, with Team Regina winning the title by just one point over Team Saskatoon."

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